DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION SCRUTINY PANEL
28TH FEBRUARY 2022

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Brookes)
Councillors Charles, Gerrard, Hamilton, Needham
and Seaton

Councillor Rollings (Cabinet Lead Member for
Transformation)

Head of Customer Experience
Information Technology Delivery Manager
Democratic Services Officer (SW)

The Chair stated that the meeting would be recorded and the sound recording subsequently made available via the Council's website. He also advised that, under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting, and the use of any such images or sound recordings was not under the Council's control.

1.   APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

2.   DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTEREST

No disclosures were made.

3.   DECLARATIONS - PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

4.   QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 11.16

No questions were submitted.

5.   SCRUTINY SCOPING DOCUMENT

Councillor Seaton arrived at the meeting at 6:05pm.

Considered and discussed, the scrutiny scope document for the Panel, agreed by Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 10th January 2022 and updated to list Panel membership and meeting dates.

It was suggested that there may be a need to update the scoping document in accordance with discussions at this meeting, particularly following the discussion of item 8 on the agenda (Work Programme and Key Task Planning).

AGREED that the scrutiny scope document be noted.

6. CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL CORPORATE STRATEGY 2020-24

The panel reviewed the Charnwood Borough Council Corporate Strategy 2020-24.

It was highlighted that the council was customer-focussed and committed to constantly improving customer experience. This should be considered throughout the course of the panel.

AGREED that the Charnwood Borough Council Corporate Strategy 2020-24 be noted.

7. CURRENT AND FUTURE PROJECTS

In accordance with the scrutiny scope document (key tasks), considered and discussed, a report of the Head of Customer Experience to inform the panel of current and future projects demonstrating the approach to delivering services as outlined in the ICT Strategy and the Customer Services Strategy an how technology will support this

Key points of discussion:

i. The Head of Customer Experience stated that the following should be considered during the course of the panel:

- Awareness of the impact of new technology in terms of customer and officer capability.
- The council's aim of reducing the total number of systems in order to increase efficiency and reduce costs.
- Any additional services recommended would need to be rational and valid. No assumptions should be made and suggestions would need to be backed by evidence.
- The costs associated with the implementation of any new systems.
- Any considerations regarding discrimination of customers.
- The timescales associated with the implementation of new systems or ways of working.
- The future support required for any new systems.

ii. It was estimated that 80-90% of customers made contact with the council once a year. Therefore it was difficult to encourage customers to engage with an online system for which sign up/sign in was required as this required effort for little benefit to the customer. It was important that any portals contained a hook to attract customers, or they may not consider the investment to be necessary.

iii. The online portal of a neighbouring council was accessed regularly by only 5% of those that had signed up. It was not clear what services this small proportion of residents were accessing via the portal.

iv. It was acknowledged that many customers may prefer to use mobile smart devices to access council services. It was confirmed that all services offered by the council were smart device accessible. The Head of Customer Experience

Charnwood

stated that she would provide information on the percentage of enquiries that had been made via a smart device at the next meeting.

v. The systems used by the council were all capable of customisations to reflect the requirements of Charnwood residents.

vi. The timescales associated with the Transformation Service Reviews had been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic but the process was ongoing. Progress with this was fed into the council's SWaP Board (Services, Workplace and People Board). The Head of Customer Experience agreed to summarise the work that had already been undertaken as part of the Transformation Service Review and to provide this at the next meeting of the panel.

vii. The website contract was due to end in 2023 and a procurement process would be completed to ensure good value for money for a new contract.

viii. The methods available for residents to contact the council were managed equally and were logged and responded to via the same stream.

ix. The Customer Experience service within the council conducted regular skills and resource audits to ensure that the required experience and skill levels were contained within teams. The service invested in existing staff and ensured teams were trained appropriately for upcoming projects and to meet the aims of the Corporate Strategy 2020-24.

x. There had been concerns regarding the capacity of teams in other areas of the council to train sufficiently for new systems being implemented.

xi. It was possible for the council to develop an app although this would incur significant costs. An app would work separately from the online portal on the website and it would not be possible to link both systems. It would be necessary to establish a hook for customers to encourage them to download and continuously use the app in order for its production to be cost efficient. There would be a requirement of strong evidence to suggest an app would be beneficial for residents.

xii. It was highlighted that information on the needs and preferences of residents would be available following the completion of the survey which would be undertaken by the panel in the coming weeks.

xiii. A number of other councils had implemented an app, including:

- East Riding of Yorkshire Council
- East Devonshire District Council
- West Oxfordshire District Council
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
- East Goscote Parish Council
- Syston Town Council

- Gloucester City Council

xiv. Virtual meetings between officers at the council and residents were not yet possible, although it was recognised that this could be beneficial.

xv. The council had a duty to ensure all customers were able to access all services and that no customer would be discriminated as a result of using a specific contact method. Equality Impact Assessments were provided for new projects where relevant.

xvi. The Head of Customer Experience agreed to provide the McKinsey report, referred to in the Customer Services Strategy 2022-2025, to members of the panel in advance of the next meeting of the panel.

AGREED

1. The report and discussion be noted.

2. That the Head of Customer Experience provide information on the percentage of enquiries that had been made via a smart device at the next meeting of the panel.

3. That the Head of Customer Experience summarises the work that has already been undertaken as part of the Transformation Service Review and provides this at the next meeting of the panel.

4. That the Head of Customer Experience provides the McKinsey report, referred to in the Customer Services Strategy 2022-2025, to members of the panel in advance of the next meeting of the panel.

8. WORK PROGRAMME AND KEY TASK PLANNING

Considered and discussed, the key tasks in the scrutiny scope document to be considered at the next meeting of the Panel and any work members of the Panel would undertake in advance of that meeting.

The following summarises the discussion:

i. It was highlighted that there was a marketing element associated with the engagement of residents in new technologies. The panel was scheduled to interview a witness with marketing experience at a later meeting.

ii. It was suggested that the panel explored the 5% of residents regularly using the online portal at a neighbouring council, as outlined in the discussion in the 'Current and Future Projects' item on the agenda.

iii. It was suggested that the Head of Customer Experience provided information to the panel on the most used online forms over the past two years. The Lead

Member for Transformation stated that data on abandoned forms was available. It was suggested that the Head of Customer Experience provided this data to members of the panel at their next meeting.

iv.   It was highlighted that an update of the scoping document would be required following the outcomes of the meeting. It was suggested that the Chair meet with the Democratic Services Officer in order to discuss this, and that the updated scoping document would be reviewed by the panel again at the next meeting.

v.   It was suggested that the website contract procurement should be scrutinised at the appropriate time.

Work allocated to members before the next meeting of the panel was as follows;

Task	Responsibility
The front end/website experience of other councils, including successes	Councillor Seaton
Exploring apps available at other councils, including successes	Councillor Charles
Front end/website/apps experience in the Private sector, including successes	Councillors Hamilton and Needham
Services offered by Charnwood Borough Council that could be incorporated into an app/ experience for older people	Councillor Gerrard

AGREED

1. that the Head of Customer Experience provided information to the panel on the most used online forms over the past two years. The Lead Member for Transformation stated that data on abandoned forms was available. It was suggested that the Head of Customer Experience provided this data to members of the panel at their next meeting.

2. That the Chair meet with the Democratic Services Officer in order to discuss the scrutiny scoping docuemnt, and that the updated scoping document would be reviewed by the panel again at the next meeting.

3. That panel members undertake the work outlined and feedback at the next meeting of the panel.

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 25th April 2022 unless notice to that effect is given to the Democratic Services Manager by five members of the Council by noon on the fifth working day following publication

of these minutes.

2. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel.

3. The following attendees listed as present attended the meeting virtually; Lead Member for Transformation, Head of Customer Experience and Information Technology Delivery Manager. The remaining attendees listed were physically present in the meeting.